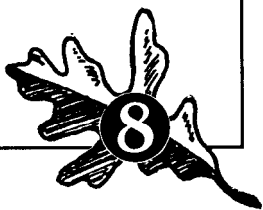


# Forest and Wildlife Benefits on Private Land



## Travel Lanes

Many of Missouri's woodlands are scattered and separated by large open areas of land, including fields, pastures and hay lands. Isolated woodlots can benefit wildlife if they are linked together by travel lanes.

When properly designed, travel lanes protect wildlife from predation and severe weather. Some wildlife, like quail, venture only a short distance from cover when feeding or nesting. Travel lanes through open fields allow wildlife to venture out a little further, so they can use more of the field.

The wider the travel lane the better. It should be at least 20 feet wide. Also, depending on the kind of wildlife you wish to favor, vegetation is very important. For example, a travel lane made from a row of tall shrubs bordered by two rows of smaller shrubs would favor small game birds. Adding legumes such as lespedeza and clover within or along the shrub rows will provide additional food and cover.

Shrubs growing alongside fences form good travel lanes. A good combination would be American plum or hazelnut on the inside row with blackberries on the outside row. A good tree/shrub combination is eastern redcedar with gray dogwood or smooth sumac. Listed

here are several trees and shrubs suitable for planting as travel lanes:

### Trees

Chokecherry  
Pin oak  
Roughleaf dogwood  
Hawthorn  
Mulberry  
Persimmon  
Redbud

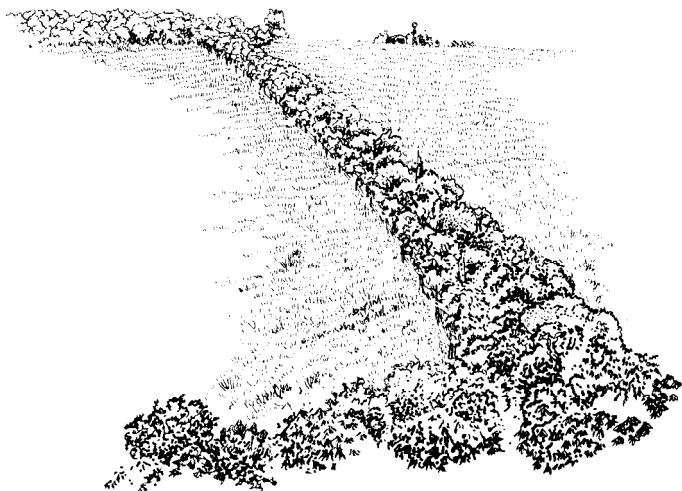
### Shrubs

Aromatic sumac  
Blackberry  
Coralberry  
Hazelnut  
Gray dogwood  
Ninebark  
American plum

Weedy travel lanes are also good, especially next to cropland. Warm-season grasses, such as big bluestem, Indian grass and switch grass, also serve this purpose while providing shelter from the elements. As an added bonus, warm-season grass travel lanes can control wind erosion.

For a good cool-season grass, mix 2 pounds orchard grass, 1 pound timothy, 2 pounds red clover and 2 pounds Korean lespedeza per acre. (This mix also makes good hay, but mowing should wait until the first week of July to avoid destroying wildlife nests.)

The simplest way to provide a good travel lane with a great mixture of plants is to let nature take its course. Choose an area to protect from mowing, grazing or cultivation and let it revert to natural cover. Heavy sod in some pastures and hay lands may inhibit this process. When this condition exists, plowing and discing will reduce grass competition and provide a



*Travel lanes through an open field make more of that field available to wildlife.*



*A mixture of trees and shrubs maintained along a fence row provides a good travel lane.*

seedbed for trees and shrubs. Birds can also help disperse seeds. As a travel lane develops, some work may be necessary to avoid invasion of undesirable trees and shrubs. Woody plants can be controlled by girdling or with herbicides. Dead standing trees provide nesting, roosting and feeding areas for many song birds.

If you are interested in designing or constructing a travel lane for your land, assistance is available from your local forester, conservation agent, or wildlife-biologist. The Missouri Department of Conservation also provides inexpensive trees and shrubs to interested landowners.



*Travel lanes provide protection from weather as well as from predation.*

